

Mowing in 1972

by The Editor

The mowing pattern has greatly changed over the past few years. 'Ride-on', 'hydraulic', 'air cushion' are now part of the vocabulary and 1972 will see them still more firmly established. Small staffs can cope with more grass in less time though some machines produce problems which only more machines will cure.

The smaller forward mounted triple units like Ransomes 73-inch Junior Motor Triple, the Horwool Triplex, Greens Triple-master, or the Toro 70-inch Professional are taking over from walk-behind mowers round greens and tee-banks and even on tees themselves. Engine power for climbing slopes with a heavy cut is fundamental in these designs. Top speed is of less consequence. Accidents arise more from speed than slide or tipping because all have low centre of gravity. Many greenkeepers report something better than a 50 per cent time-saving since switching to this type of operation. Towed mini-gangs have won less popularity on golf courses though Atco and Ransomes still produce versions cutting 56 inches width.

The bigger versions, Toro Super Pro (84½ ins.) and Ransomes Standard Motor Triple (86 ins.) have been joined by the Allen Motostandard 1200, 78½ ins. The manufacturers rate their cutting capacity respectively at:

28 acres per day 10,000 sq yds per hour and 4½ acres per hour (in 4th gear) but top gear speeds are specified as 8.80, 4 and 6¼ mph respectively and you will need to be sure that the work you want the machine to do will permit top-gear operation. Incidentally, the machine sheds at the monster Dar-es-Salam 7,500 yard championship course, made by an American Golf Course Architect, look very much like an Ipswich production line with five Motor Triples dominating the scene.

It was only a matter of time before the ride-on principle was adapted to mowing greens, though so far British manufacturers seem to have been reluctant to follow. Greens with a top-soil mix made to a modern specification, likely to retain drainage characteristics even under regular compaction, stand up to this usage best of all. Automatic watering, leaving the green permanently moist, also plays a part in estimation of benefits. The ability to lift mowers individually is an important feature to look for. The final cut round the edge will otherwise put the wheels on exactly the same route each time. The Toro Greenmaster 3 is the best known in this country. Starting at 7.00 am, all 18 greens should be cut by 10.30 am, including the time needed to empty the boxes. Golfers may still prefer narrow stripes of cut at weekends but during the week a tremendous number of man hours can be saved for extra finesse elsewhere.

For those still walking, the choice of green mowers in the 18 inch to 20 inch range gets no smaller. Autocertes, Atco Special, Greenmaster, all have their adherents. Greens, Lloyds, Dennis, Suffolk, Hayter also build machines for super-fine cutting. Easy attachment of combs should be a



Minigangs, minitractor and mini

feature nowadays and, of course, the more you specialise in your favourite mark throughout the range, the simpler becomes routine maintenance and arrangements for repairs, though many firms like Parkers, R. C. Craig, Relf & Kendall, Mountains, Parker & Ballinger, Huxleys and Gibbs can cope with most situations.

The same wide choice applies to standard trailed gang-mowers, though the more recent application of hydraulic drive to reels as well as lifting is confined to the Ransomes Hydraulic Power 5/7 Gang Mower. The 7 unit model will set your club back about £2,000 but will cut seven acres an hour at seven mph. For rough work the Hayter mounted triple rotary is a reversible supporter to cylinder machines.

Rotary mowers have multiplied in the last 20 years, though it is now only seven years since Flymo introduced the original 19 inch air-cushion rotary. In 1972 a 15 inch version will be added to the range and the 21 inch Contractor 52 has been re-designed with a new retractable undercarriage amongst other new features. The price is £78.75. One advantage of this machine is its great versatility on slopes, under bushes, and on newly sown areas allowed to get too long. Always remember to follow the operating instructions when working on banks and wear sensible footwear, not sandals.

Whatever your choice, remember that each design is a compromise. No one machine can incorporate every advantage. Weight, balance, controls, power, speed, ease of adjustment are only some of the variables. Keep it oiled, keep it greased, keep it adjusted and, as they used to say in the music halls, keep it clean.

For details of these machines and any others in which you may be interested, send a postcard giving your address and the names of those which interest you to: B.G.G.A. (Mowers), Addington Court Golf Club, Featherbed Lane, Addington, Croydon, CRO 9AA.